

REMARKS

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claim 2 is cancelled herein without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claims 1 and 3-20 are pending. Claim 1 is amended. Claims 1 and 13 are independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein.

Reasons for Entry of Amendments

At the outset, it is respectfully requested that this Amendment be entered into the Official File in view of the fact that the amendments to the claims automatically place the application in condition for allowance.

In the alternative, if the Examiner does not agree that this application is in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that this Amendment be entered for the purpose of appeal. This Amendment reduces the issues on appeal by canceling allowable claim 2 and incorporating the limitations thereof into independent claim 1. This Amendment was not presented at an earlier date in view of the fact that the Examiner has just now presented new grounds for rejection in this Final Office Action.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner states that claims 13-20 have been allowed, and that claims 2-12 would be would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the early indication of allowable subject matter in this application. As noted above, independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 2. Claim 2 is now cancelled.

Therefore, independent claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

Drawings

The Examiner has not indicated whether or not the drawings have been accepted. Clarification is requested in the next official communication.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and §102(e)

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Bosma et al. (U.S. Publication 2005/0223998), and claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Norberg (U.S. Patent 6,571,730). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As noted above, and while not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the present application, independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 2. Therefore, independent claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

At least for the reasons described above, the Applicant respectfully submits that the combination of features as set forth in independent claim 1 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including Bosma et al. and Norberg. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

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Dependent claims 3-12 are in condition for allowance due to their dependency from allowable independent claim 1, or due to the additional novel limitations set forth therein.

Claims 13-20 have been allowed.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) and §102(b) are respectfully requested.

All claims are now in condition for allowance.

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CONCLUSION


All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 208-4030 (Direct Line).

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,
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